AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An image processing method for obtaining a layout image signal representing a layout image, in which a plurality of person images are laid out, from a plurality of original image signals, each of the original image signals representing a person image, in which a face pattern of a person is embedded, the method comprising the steps of:

i) detecting a face candidate region ~~information~~ from each of the original image signals, said face candidate region ~~information~~ representing a position and/or a size of the face pattern of the person in the person image represented by each original image signal,

ii) performing a pattern matching process for each face pattern represented by said detected face candidate region ~~information~~ to calculate an amount of displacement and/or size difference thereof from a normalized value,

iii) performing a face pattern normalizing process on each of the original image signals based on said detected face candidate region ~~information~~ and said calculated amount of displacement and/or size difference, a plurality of normalized image signals being obtained from said face pattern normalizing process, and

iv) laying out a plurality of images, which are represented by said normalized image signals, in a predetermined

2

layout, whereby the layout image signal representing the thus formed layout image is obtained.

2. (original) A method as defined in Claim 1 wherein said face pattern normalizing process is performed by utilizing affine transformation.

3. (currently amended) An image processing apparatus for obtaining a layout image signal representing a layout image, in which a plurality of person images are laid out, from a plurality of original image signals, each of the original image signals representing a person image, in which a face pattern of a person is embedded, the apparatus comprising:

i) detection means for detecting a face candidate region ~~information~~ from each of the original image signals, said face candidate region ~~information~~ representing a position and/or a size of the face pattern of the person in the person image represented by each original image signal,

ii) pattern matching means for performing a pattern matching process for each face pattern represented by said detected face candidate region ~~information~~ to calculate an amount of displacement and/or size difference thereof from a normalized value,

iii) normalization means for performing a face pattern normalizing process on each of the original image signals based on

3

said detected face <u>candidate region</u> ~~information~~ and said calculated amount of displacement and/or size difference, a plurality of normalized image signals being obtained from said face pattern normalizing process, and

iv) editing means for laying out a plurality of images, which are represented by said normalized image signals, in a predetermined layout, and obtaining the layout image signal representing the thus formed layout image.

4. (original) An apparatus as defined in Claim 3 wherein said face pattern normalizing process is performed by utilizing affine transformation.

5. (currently amended) A recording medium, on which a program for causing a computer to execute an image processing method has been recorded and from which the computer is capable of reading the program, the image processing method comprising obtaining a layout image signal representing a layout image, in which a plurality of person images are laid out, from a plurality of original image signals, each of the original image signals representing a person image, in which a face pattern of a person is embedded,

wherein the program comprises the procedures of:

i) detecting <u>a</u> face <u>candidate region</u> ~~information~~ from each of the original image signals, said face <u>candidate region</u>

~~information~~ representing a position and/or a size of the face pattern of the person in the person image represented by each original image signal,

ii) performing a pattern matching process for each face pattern represented by said detected face <u>candidate region</u> ~~information~~ to calculate an amount of displacement and/or size difference thereof from a normalized value,

iii) performing a face pattern normalizing process on each of the original image signals based on said detected face <u>candidate region</u> ~~information~~ and said calculated amount of displacement and/or size difference, a plurality of normalized image signals being obtained from said face pattern normalizing process, and

iv) laying out a plurality of images, which are represented by said normalized image signals, in a predetermined layout, whereby the layout image signal representing the thus formed layout image is obtained.

6. (original) A recording medium as defined in Claim 5 wherein said face pattern normalizing process is performed by utilizing affine transformation.

7. (new) The image processing method according to claim 1, wherein the face candidate region is detected in accordance with hue and saturation.

5

8. (new) The image processing method according to claim 1, wherein only a face outline is utilized for the pattern matching process.

9. (new) The image processing apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the face candidate region is detected in accordance with hue and saturation.

10. (new) The image processing apparatus according to claim 3, wherein only a face outline is utilized for the pattern matching process.

11. (new) The recording medium according to claim 5, wherein the face candidate region is detected in accordance with hue and saturation.

12. (new) The recording medium according to claim 5, wherein only a face outline is utilized for the pattern matching process.